1981

Three for Mike Cummings

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1. Desire

When Spring came we thawed my car, pulled nests from the wheel wells and engine cavity. Then, we took long drives at night past fields patched with old snow.

Drunk, we crept through towns so small we didn’t see them until the next morning. These were places we could only go after the bars closed, trespassing, disturbing the sows.

I still don’t know what we were doing there. Trying to love everything, I guess, with equal prurience.

2. Intellect

In the back bedroom of the farmhouse near Morse, sometimes I could almost quit thinking, forget the barn leaning towards itself, its loft sagging with tons of wet hay left over from the days when a small place could make a go of it. I could have stayed there forever; the barn was almost massive enough to defeat thought.
3. *Beauty*

I say *thank you* to the bus driver
and start home through this
suburb of retired fishermen.
I’ve lost your address.

Across the street, a drunk stumbles
from the padded door of Rosy’s Bar
and stops traffic. Taking his time
against the light, he makes the other side
then pauses to yank a rose
from a bush in someone’s yard
and gets away with it. Surprised,
he tries for two blocks to poke
the stem through his buttonhole.
No needle ever was more difficult to thread
than this, which will mend nothing.
Defeated, he chucks it,
really guilty now.